

**IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE NORTHERN DISTRICT OF MISSISSIPPI
DELTA DIVISION**

DIANE COWAN, et al.

PLAINTIFFS

and

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

PLAINTIFF-INTERVENOR

v.

**Civil Action No. 2:65-CV-00031-GHD
(previously DC 6531-K)**

**BOLIVAR COUNTY BOARD OF
EDUCATION, et al.**

DEFENDANTS

**CLEVELAND SCHOOL DISTRICT'S REPORT TO COURT ON IMPLEMENTATION
OF MAY 13, 2016 PLAN**

COMES NOW, Defendant Cleveland School District, by and through counsel, and pursuant to this Court's directive to file a report with the Court detailing the District's compliance with the Court's time line for implementation of the amended Court approved plan, files such report as follows:

1. Continue Implementation of Measures Commenced Earlier.

The District has continued its implementation of measures outlined in previous reports as discussed in more detail below.

2. Facility Renovations, Repairs, and other Improvements.

The District passed a resolution to finance renovations with a 3 mil note and has successfully completed a validation hearing on the bonds. These renovations include upgrading the existing science lab at the new Cleveland Central High, providing an elevator at Cleveland Central High to afford greater access to students and faculty with disabilities, bringing entrances and bathrooms into compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act and building a canopy

for students at the new Cleveland Central Middle School. After bidding, a contract was awarded to Timbo Construction for the project with a completion date set for July 20, 2018.

Meanwhile, the black/gold/Wildcat and Trojan color schemes/mascots have been replaced with the new Purple/Black/Wolf colors and mascot. As previously reported, Varsity Brands, Inc. has assisted the District in transforming the new high school and middle school with new banners, signs and flags. Varsity Brands awarded the District a \$50,000.00 grant to assist in its re-branding effort.

3. Community Support/Public Engagement/Multi-Racial Advisory Panel.

The District continues to see much success both in terms of community support and athletic achievement at the new schools, which has only served to increase community participation and excitement throughout the District. Local businesses and individuals continue to donate towards a “dual credit” scholarship fund. The goal is that every child who qualifies to take a dual credit class at Delta State University may do so at no charge to the child. The District plans on implementing the no-cost “dual credit” program for the Spring 2018 semester.

The new high school booster club is successfully moving forward as one club and is providing much needed support through fund-raising for the District’s activities. The booster club has been especially instrumental in providing support for the home football games, which have seen overwhelming attendance. The Cleveland Central Wolves went an undefeated 12-0 on the season and play tonight (Friday, November 10, 2017) in the first round of the MHSAA 5-A State Championships. During the football season, the town has engaged in a “Paint it Purple” campaign where everyone is encouraged to show their support for the Wolves by wearing purple on game day Fridays. Booster clubs at both schools have also designed and sold t-shirts, yard

signs and bumper stickers supporting the new schools.

The District's first Homecoming as Cleveland Central was, overall, a success. A Homecoming parade was held and a Homecoming Court was elected. The football game itself took place at Delta State University to accommodate the significant crowd. Representatives from the Department of Justice were on-hand for the Homecoming festivities, and the District conducted tours of the schools for the DOJ so that they might witness first-hand the progress the District is making. The District also set up meetings with the DOJ and representatives of the Multi-Racial Advisory panel as well as students, teachers, principals and staff.¹

4. Work with the advisory panel to finalize activities and efforts to commemorate the traditions of the former schools.

The advisory panel, along with Emily Jones, archivist at Delta State University, have now moved all Cleveland High and Eastside High artifacts to Delta State University and inventoried all of the artifacts from Cleveland High School and East Side High School. Mrs. Jones has designed a potential display for the retained artifacts. The next step is for the design to be presented to the Board of Trustees, with funding being approved by the Board or raised privately.

¹ During the October Homecoming Department of Justice meeting, some of the Multi-Racial Advisory Panel members expressed concerns about the traditions utilized during Homecoming. There was also a concern regarding the level of consistent participation on the panel by the panel members. The panel members also desired more feedback from the District. The District will work with the panel, private Plaintiffs and the Department of Justice to ensure the multi-racial advisory panel is being utilized in ways contemplated by the Court and all parties. One possibility is reducing the panel size to a more manageable number to ensure active engagement. Another suggestion is to add current students to the panel. The District will work with all parties to revise the panel composition and direction, as needed, and present suggestions to the Court for its approval.

Respectfully submitted,

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CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I, Jamie F. Jacks, attorney for Defendant Cleveland School District, do hereby certify that I have this date served this *Report to the Court* by electronically filing via the ECF filing system to all registered counsel of record.

Dated: November 10, 2017.

By: /s/ Jamie F. Jacks